

[APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR ACQUIRING INFORMATION WHILE DRILLING]

Abstract

An apparatus and method useful for acquiring information from a subsurface formation penetrated by a wellbore contemplate the use of a tubular body adapted for connection within a drill string disposed in the wellbore. The tubular body is equipped with one or more protuberances (e.g., ribs) defining an expanded axial portion. A probe is carried by the tubular body at or near a first location within the expanded axial portion of the body where the cross-sectional area of the expanded axial portion is a minimum. The probe is movable between retracted and extended positions. In another aspect, the inventive apparatus may further include a cover releasably-secured about the probe for protecting the probe while drilling. In a further aspect, the inventive apparatus may include a shearable backup support carried by the tubular body azimuthally opposite the probe permitting release of the apparatus from the wellbore in the event of a failure. In yet another aspect, the probe is at least partially carried within a debris-clearing channel formed in a protruding portion of the tubular body to

promote free movement of the probe within the wellbore.